THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism

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PEASANT COMMUNES.

It was about six in the evening when we arrived at the "Red Town"; the name given to the labour agricultural Commune organised by working men, and situated eight versts from Kalouga, on Prince Gelytsine's estate.

The "Manor" has been somewhat neglected, it is clear there has been no careful hand or eye for the last two years, but that "abomination of desolation" which I expected to meet with was absent. We were met by three girl Communists, neatly dressed in tidy khaki blouses and skirts, and not without just a touch of coquettishness about them.

"Where is the Commune?" I asked them. And smiling archly at my ignorance, one of the girls replied with a touch of pride: "Why, the Commune is everywhere round about here."

They went to call the chairman of the Communal Soviet—Comrade Ratiouk, a man with a sunburnt, thin, energetic face. He approached us, limping. "I injured my leg through inexperience," he explained, "when trying to help my comrades wipe the lime off the floors after white-washing the house. But the lime burnt into my leg, and now I can't succeed in curing it."

His simple, artless tale gave us a glimpse of the work in the Commune; here is the chairman of the Communal Soviet (a sort of manager) who scrubs the floors together with his comrades in order to give the dining-room a bright, cosy aspect.

At the gates are the lions, on the front of the house the Gelytsine coat-of-arms. On the upper floor of the "Manor" house a theatre and stage have been erected. Here are common wooden benches and simple stage scenery.

In the room stand antique furniture, the varnish of which had lost its freshness, but there was no evidence of great disorder. In one of the rooms, all the family portraits of the Gelytsines' ancestors are carefully collected in readiness for the museums. Had the Communists not taken all this wealth into their hands, it would certainly have perished.

On the lower floor, the floors are pulled up; the chairman of the Soviet said with conviction, "Let us only get the field work off our hands, then we shall set to work here. I have already got parquet for the floor, we shall renew the plaster, white-wash, paint. Then the whole Commune will come to live here—we shall do everything with our own hands. . . ." I feel his are not mere empty words, but that he will do as he says.

The Commune was formed only lately. It comprises several families, who are for the most part the youths from the Bobruick Artillery Stores (Aplouga). Many of them are refugees from the western provinces who are acquainted with the improved systems of management there. When they began to organise the Commune, everything was in a state of desolation. More than 20 Oldenburg cows could hardly drag themselves along for want of fodder, and gave not more than two or three pounds of milk.

Now, on the outskirts of the forest, these

Continued on back Page.

IN THE STREAM OF REVOLUTION. By Maxim Gorki.

PART II.

WHO HAS PROFANED THE WORLD?

Three years of cruel, insensate shambles, three years during which the best blood of the earth has been shed, the best brains of Europe have been destroyed. France, "the leader of humanity," has nearly been bled to death; Italy, "the most beautiful gift which the gods have made to this dark earth," is on the verge of destruction; England, who, "with quiet pride revealed to the world the miracle of labour," is stiffening for a last desperate effort; "the industrious people of Germany" are suffocated by the steel talons of the war. Belgium, Rumania, Serbia and Poland are in ruins; Russia is weak and a dreamer, the country which has never lived, which has never had an opportunity to show to the world her secret strength, is economically and spiritually broken.

For nineteen centuries Europe preached humanity, in the churches which are now being destroyed by bombs, in books which today their soldiers use as incendiary material. In the twentieth century humanity is forgotten and scorned. Inventions, the result of disinterested work of science, are now plundered by shameless marauders and utilised for the destruction of humanity.

What are all the wars of thirty and a hundred years in the past compared with these three fantastic years of butchery? Where can we find a justification for this unexampled crime against the civilisation of our planet? In no way can this cruel auto-destruction justify itself. However much the hypocrites speak of the "grand" end of the war, their lies cannot hide the shameful truth: that this war is the daughter of avarice, the only recognised and adored goddess of those assassins who traffic in the lives of humanity. In every nation these rogues are standing by those who believe in a final victory, in the ideal of universal brotherhood, and they call them mad, dangerous men, deprived of hearts, dreamers who know nothing of the love of country. They forget that Christ, John of Damascus, Francis of Assisi, Leo Tolstoi, and all the other demi-gods and supermen who are the pride and the honour of humanity, were dreamers of the same kind.

But those who are prepared to destroy millions of lives for a few kilometres of foreign soil, have neither a god nor a devil. For them the lives of their comrades are of less value than a stone, and their love of country is nothing more than an acquired mental habit. They wish to continue to live as they have been in the habit of doing, even should that cause the ruin of the whole world. For three years they have been living up to their necks in the blood of millions of men who shed it because these "patriots" wished it.

But when the energy of the masses is at last destroyed, when at last the will to live a purer, more humane life is revived in them, and an end will be put to this bloody delirium; then the culprits of all the destruction will cry out: "The fault is not ours! The devastation of the world, the ruins and the pillage of Europe were not caused by us!"

But when that day arrives we hope that the "voice of the people" will be the "voice of God," and will cry more loudly than the most bare-faced lies. Let the forces be united of all those who believe in the triumph over shame and madness. Because in the end reason must always be victorious.

NEW MEN.

What will the New Year bring? All that we will ask of it. To become capable men and women we must believe that these days of fury, stained with blood and mud, are the great days in which a new Russia has birth.

It is just in these days, in which man, full of the tenets of equality and fraternity, plunders the public and takes away even his neighbour's shirt; in which the struggle against the idol of property does not stop him from torturing and killing, with bestial brutality, the smallest contravenor of the law, of the inviolability of property; in which the "free citizens" make every sort of doubtful transaction and exploit one another in the most brutal and shameful way; in these days of the most stupendous contradictions, the new Russia is born.

It is a creation full of pain which is taking place over the extraordinary destruction of the old form of life, under the worn out ruins of the ghastly caverns in which for three hundred years the people have struggled for a little air, in which they were fed on hatred and unhappiness; in the midst of the breaking forth of all the degradation and vileness heaped upon us by the heavy yoke of the autocracy, in the midst of the eruption of a veritable volcano of brutality, the old Russian people are dying out, the lazy, self-satisfied dreamers. And their place is being taken by the worker full of health and boldness; the artificer makes a new life.

The new Russian is not attractive, and may be far less attractive than he ever was. Always fearing that his victory may not be secure and definite, still incapable of enjoying to the full the fruits of his deliverance, he covers himself with an armour of mean hatred in order to acquire a greater certainty of the incredible truth; that he is really free. To gain this certainty, what a heavy price he pays and what a heavy price are the objects of his experiment paying!

But life, this severe and cruel master, will soon bind him once more with the chains of necessity, and will compel him to work, and in communal work he will lose all his petty, servile, shameful instincts, which still dominate him. The new men and women will know how to create the new conditions; the new conditions will create new men and new women. Out of the sorrow of these days will rise up the new man, ignorant of the miseries of slavery, no longer disfigured by oppression, and the liberty itself which he enjoys will render him incapable of oppressing his companions.

Let us go to meet the New Year with faith that men will learn to love the work and to understand its significance. Work done with love is not servitude but creation. When at last the man will have learnt to love the work which he does for himself, then the world and all its glories will be his.

—*L'Ordine Nuovo.*

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.

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BELA KUN.

Bela Kun is being tried on some trumped-up murder charge. Perhaps he will be convicted of murder and sentenced to death, but murder is not the real crime.

His real crime is that he and his government gave to the poor a share of what had been held by the rich. In Buda Pest, as in London, some people lived in great houses, of which they occupied only a small part, whilst others were herded together like cattle. Some people were on the verge of starvation, whilst others lived in luxury: it was always so, but the war had accentuated the contrast. The Soviet Government of which Bela Kun was a prominent member, rationed the necessaries of life, taking up their task in a time of acute shortage. It took the children, ill from war hardship, to recover in the seldom-used villas of the rich on the mountains overlooking the town. It threw open the luxurious bathing places hitherto reserved to wealthy persons, for the free use of all the school children. It rationed, not only food and housing, but incomes also by greatly raising the wages of all workers and preventing the rich from drawing more than a certain weekly sum from the bank.

The Hungarian Soviet Government, under Bela Kun, attempted the building up of a classless society of free men and women.

The capitalist class all over the world opposed this attempt, and soon, by trickery and by force, the Hungarian Soviet Government was overthrown.

Now, Bela Kun, with others less well known than he, are being tried by their enemies, the capitalists, whom they attempted to bring down to the level of other citizens.

We need a Bela Kun here! We need a Soviet Government in this country very urgently!

Take the 'bus from any East London or other densely populated working-class district, to the West End, take, for instance, a number 8 'bus from Old Ford. When one starts off almost everyone in the 'bus looks pale and tired. Old, shabby clothes predominate. Many of the children show signs of rickets or curvature, their legs are thin, their faces are white with dark rings under the eyes. The women have an anxious expression; every line of the face shows that they are seldom free from the thought of how to meet the cost of necessaries. Past Liverpool-street, the appearance of the people changes; better clothes, rounder cheeks, an air of comfort and satisfaction seems to grow amongst the changing passengers. When we have passed the Mansion House one appears to be amongst people of a different race. The 'bus has carried us from a district of pinching, health-destroying poverty, into the centre of superabundant wealth. The great shop windows glitter with every luxury. The people wear costly furs and jewels. The hair of the women is splendidly curled, their skin is powdered. The men spend the entire weekly income of an East End family upon a single meal. The children of these fortunate people do not play in the gutters of sordid streets; either they are in the country, or, charmingly dressed, and attended by nurses, they divide their time between Kensington Gardens and their own gardens or beautiful nurseries filled with expensive toys.

Bela Kun and his Government in Buda Pest, levelled up the East End with the West. Therefore, he is being tried for his life.

It was reported the other day by a Vienna paper, the *Zeitung am Mittag*, that Prince Cyril of Saxe-Coburg, son of the ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, against whom the jingoes in this country raised so much outcry during the war, is likely to be made the King of Hungary now that the workers' government is overthrown. This prince is visited by powerful members of the Magyar, the dominant race in Hungary, *and also by representatives of the British Government*. The British Government is deep in all these intrigues.

Comrades of the working class, you are paying for this.

You are paying also for the war on Soviet Russia.

FOLLOWING THE SPECIAL TRADES CONGRESS—WHAT NEXT?

The Special Trades Congress has proved abortive. It has put off deciding whether to take action of any kind on anything till February.

We must now work hard to ensure that action shall be taken then. Every Trade Unionist must take steps to see that his union tabulates a resolution concerning the Russian intervention, covering the following points:—

1. *The Soviet Government must be recognised.*

Peace must be made with Soviet Russia on the basis of no annexations, no indemnities, the right of the people to decide their own destiny.

2. *Effective guarantees must be given:—*

(a) That there shall be no future interference in the internal affairs of Soviet Russia.

(b) That there shall be no blockade or boycott of Soviet Russia.

(c) That no military, naval, financial or other aid in munitions, stores, or otherwise shall be sent to the external or internal enemies of Soviet Russia.

(d) That no smaller, weaker, or conquered nation shall be coerced, aided, or incited to commit acts hostile to Soviet Russia.

3. *The blockade shall immediately be raised.*

4. *All British troops of the British Empire shall be withdrawn from Russia.*

5. *The Navy shall be withdrawn from Russian waters, and shall cease all action hostile to Soviet Russia.*

6. *A general strike shall be declared one week from the conclusion of the Special Congress.*

7. *A strike committee shall be elected by the Congress.*

If the Trades Congress fails to act, the rank and file should do so.

So much for Russia.

Other important questions will also be raised at the Congress. Amongst these is that of nationalising the mines. It cannot be too emphatically stated that we shall never win a satisfactory scheme of socialisation for the mining, or any other industry, within the capitalist system. The miners should continue to fight for the socialisation of their industry, but they must not slacken their efforts to abolish capitalism, in order that all industries may be socialised. Only thus can their own plans mature. In the meantime there is but one choice before Labour: either to accept the Government's refusal of nationalisation, or to take industrial action to compel the Government. Such industrial action should not be left to the miners alone. All industrial workers should line up for the fight together.

Therefore, all trade unionists should see that their organisations tabulate strike resolutions.

As to the food question and unemployment, the same thing faces us. Under capitalism the question cannot be solved.

The unemployed may demand maintenance at the rate they would be earning if at work, but no capitalist government will ever grant it.

The food supply is intermixed with the entire economic structure. The newly elected Labour majorities on the Town and Borough Councils are beginning to realise how true that is. One cannot tear out from the intricate capitalistic system even one commodity and deal with it separately.

Workers' Soviets or Councils, built up from the workshops and from the women in the working-class streets, sending delegates from factory and ward areas to larger district areas, and so on to national councils, could adequately and justly deal with the food problem, but only if possessed of the complete power of government and prepared to abolish the entire capitalist system and erect a Communist system in its place.

In the meantime suppose we had a general strike:—

To make a real peace with Soviet Russia.
To socialise the mines.
To socialise the food supply.
To pay the unemployed as though employed.

Capitalism will never accede those demands: it could not continue to exist if they were conceded.

Those who enter on the strike must realise that the socialisation demands can only be put into practice under Communism.

Those who enter on the strike must realise that to win it they must do more than merely withhold their labour; they must be prepared to seize the power of government, and to undertake the responsibility of running a Soviet State.

E. Sylvia Pankhurst.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT.

December 15th.—The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated that Mr. O'Grady at Copenhagen "is not authorised to receive any communications" from Maxim Litvinoff; therefore, Litvinoff's peace offer was returned *unopened*! Was there ever such affrontery?

Army Estimates.

The sum of £5,000,000 was voted in addition to the previous estimate for Army Services. Mr. Adamson (Lab.) questioned this expenditure for a country on the verge of bankruptcy. He also condemned the system of keeping boys under 18 in the army who had joined since the Armistice. To this Mr. Churchill replied, "We must have an army of some kind!"

Starvation.

December 16th.—Mr. Bonar Law announced that £25,000 was being granted to buy coal in the United Kingdom for Vienna, and that also 1,000 tons of fats are being shipped there. What Austria wants is the right to live, not doles, though these may be acceptable at the moment.

"Freeman's Journal."

The adjournment of the House was moved by Mr. T. P. O'Connor (I.N.) to call attention to the fact that the military removed part of the plant of the *Freeman's Journal*. It was stated that "seditious" articles appeared in a certain issue. The Labour Party expressed its sympathy with the protest raised by Mr. O'Connor, at the same time pointing out that they "have no sympathy as a party with the serious crimes which are being perpetrated in Ireland." Thus showing as in the case of Bolshevik Russia, how the Labour Party believes the capitalist story without any doubts.

Unemployment.

December 17th.—The Minister of Labour expressed his sympathy for the distress of the unemployed, and stated that the National Relief Fund was now going to alleviate the present distress. We know what that will mean; poor people will be cross-examined as though they were criminals before a grant is made them. What the unemployed want is work or the equivalent out of work pay, not charity.

"No Russia"

December 18th.—The late [illegible] by Mr. Lloyd George are to e[illegible] "Who is Russia?" He ma[illegible] Russia; therefore peace cannot be [illegible] that does not exist! Was th[illegible] trickery? At the moment, he admit[illegible] Bolsheviks are victorious and that they h[illegible] victorious before and then been beaten back! this we see that the Allies are hoping that spring may bring the Bolsheviks ill-luck. The Prime Minister summed up by saying that therefore "nothing better can be done than to pursue the policy in regard to which the Allies are in complete accord." In other words the Allies mean to watch their opportunity to crush the Bolsheviks; and America and Japan are to guard against Bolshevism extending to the East.

Ruin.

"This country cannot undertake the whole task of setting the world, which has been shattered, on its feet again," was Mr. Lloyd George's remark on not giving substantial credits to Central Europe. But Mr. Lloyd George advocated the "knock-out blow," and not being a fool he must have known what that meant not only to the "enemy" but to this country!

M. O'C.

NEWS FROM ITALY.

(By Our Special Correspondent.)

Rome, December 6th.

The events of the past week astonished the leaders of the Socialist Party no less than the readers of newspapers in the outside world. These leaders had not realised fully the revolutionary mood of the masses.

The strikes and insurrections which took place throughout Italy were utterly spontaneous. They were the answer of the workers to the systematic provocation practised by the officer class. Just how the *provocateurs* were organised we do not know. But it seems clear that they acted by pre-arrangement. Their concerted action was so obvious that the workers considered it the evidence of an organized counter-revolution.

Socialist Deputies Assaulted.

At noon on Monday, December 1st, some of the Socialist deputies leaving the Parliament building after the Royal Session, were insulted and beaten by groups of officers. The same night a group of deputies walking home after a closed meeting in the Casa del Popolo was attacked by officers and government police. Several were severely beaten. Deputy Serrati, of Turin, was knocked down and then, in spite of the fact that he showed his deputy's card, was arrested and held for two hours. The remainder of the deputies, who included the chief trade union leaders of Rome, immediately retired to a new meeting, and formally proclaimed a general strike of protest for the city. Messengers were sent out to carry the news by word of mouth to the workers, and by noon all the trams and factories, together with many of the shops, were not working

The same afternoon telephone messages were sent to the chief industrial cities to inquire whether the strike could be extended. The answer, together with the result of it, is contained in the following incomplete list:—

The Workers' Reply.

MILAN.—Complete strike. Street fighting; persistent attacks on the troops in the Piazza del Duomo and the Galleries Victor Emmanuele, with an attempt at barricades. Four killed, including one officer. Many wounded. Many officers attacked by the people. Three hundred arrested.

TURIN.—Strike complete in city and general in surrounding country. Street fighting. Three dead, thirty wounded, including many soldiers. One hundred arrested. More than 100 officers attacked on streets and deprived of their insignia.

BOLOGNA.—Strike complete. Street fighting; one dead, several wounded.

ROME.—Strike complete. Street fighting; one dead, seven wounded.

ANDRIA.—City in control of insurrectionists for a day. Pitched battle in public square. Two hundred wounded. Shops burned.

MANTUA.—City for two days in control of insurrectionists. Divisional headquarters captured; caserne of 72nd Infantry assaulted; railway stations seized; telegraphic apparatus destroyed; rails torn up and railroad blocked. Jail captured and prisoners released. Soldiers attacked on the streets and disarmed. Gunshops seized and guns distributed among the workers. The cry was: "It is the revolution." Eight dead and fifty wounded, many soldiers and officers. Two hundred arrested.

FLORENCE.—Strike complete in city and province. Railroad workers struck and telegraph wires cut. Street fighting. Three wounded.

PISA.—Railroad workers struck. City paralyzed.

GENOA.—City and port paralyzed by strike. Street fighting. Thirty thousand workers in Socialist demonstration.

NAPLES.—Strike called after two days, and strike order generally observed.

FERRARA.—Strike in city and province. Public services paralysed.

Strike also complete in Piacenza, Reggio Emilia, Parma, Pavia, Ravenna, Bergamo, Livorno, Como, Cremona, Varese, Monza, Lecco.

The workers were protesting against what they believed to be a vast counter-revolutionary plot, in which the super-patriotic elements, especially the officer class, were supposed to be playing the leading part. Hence the attacks on officers in Rome, similar to those which occurred in Milan "Spartacus week" in January. These had previously occurred in Italy.

Deputy Treves, in the Chamber of Deputies (he himself is a Moderate), stated the feeling of the masses when he said: "We feel about us the air of counter-revolution. Lenin has not yet come. But already Koltchak is being invoked."

The Revolutionary Masses.

As has been said, the leaders of the Socialist party are frankly astonished by the spontaneous response to the general strike call. In Rome, for example, the workers refused to cease striking at the word of their leaders, but extended the demonstration for another twenty-four hours. And *Avanti*, which is in the control of the Maximalist faction, is shrewdly using the situation to force the more moderate deputies to a more revolutionary attitude. (Of the 156 Socialist deputies in the present Parliament, only 50 or so are avowed revolutionists.)

"We see," says *Avanti*, in effect, "that the masses are more revolutionary than we are. Henceforth, we must give up the illusion that we are leading the masses, and recognise that we are following them. Only as we follow them and fulfil their will have we any function in the Italian revolutionary movement."

Thus far, all the moderate, or "Reformist," deputies, under the leadership of Turati and Treves, have remained with the Party, subject to its discipline, though protesting that they believe the Maximalist tendency wrong. Henceforth, they must adopt at least a relatively revolutionary attitude, or lose their popular support altogether. Thus the events of the past week have strengthened the revolutionary trend within the party as outside of it.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION.

The Mussolinin and d'Annunzio Conspiracy.

The Italian Press has almost suppressed the news of the indictment and trial of M. Benito Mussolini and others, for an attempted *coup d-état*. It will be remembered that Mussolini, former editor of the Rome *Avanti*, became an ardent interventionist at the beginning of the war, and has since turned into Italy's extremist jingoist. He now directs the nationalist-imperialist daily, *Il Popolo d'Italia* of Milan. He has been assigned, by the junta of Italian Imperialists, to the leadership of the political aspect of the movement (on a pseudo-Socialist basis), while the military leadership has been taken by d'Annunzio.

The present Court process undertaken by the Italian Government against Mussolini and his friends is the result of the throwing of a bomb at a parade of Socialists, celebrating the electoral victory, in Milan, on November 17th. In this incident, twelve Socialists were wounded, one of them fatally. The next day, police searchers uncovered bombs and fire-arms in the club-rooms of the various "Arditi" societies in Milan. The men who actually threw the bomb have not been identified, but numerous witnesses have established that they were officers in the uniform of the Arditi.

Included with Mussolini in the indictment are Captain Vecchi, leader of the Arditi white guard in Milan; Marinetti, futurist poet, musician, and general dynamiter of art; Umberto Casella, secretary to Mussolini; and one Brabanti. The preliminary hearing of the trial was held this past week in Milan.

The formal indictment reads: "Benito Mussolini, together with Umberto Casella, for having, in Milan, from September 1st, 1919, and thereafter, in conspiracy and with Vecchi, Marinetti and Brabanti, and others, formed an armed body for the purpose of committing crimes against the person, of arousing public panic, and of exciting public tumult and disorder, accumulating and maintaining in the premises of the Associations of Arditi and of societies of veterans, revolvers, cartridges, and bombs, not declared and delivered to the authorities; for having in the said circumstances formed an armed band for the purpose of violently altering the constitution of the State, of possessing themselves of the Government, and further of causing the inhabitants of the kingdom to rise in arms against the powers of the State."

The indictment may be taken as the first move of the Government against the d'Annunzio faction within the army and among the demobilised soldiers, which is feared as a force tending to undermine authority, and, in certain circumstances aiming at an open revolution and nationalistic and imperialistic purposes. It must be understood that the activities of the d'Annunzio faction are directed equally against the Socialists and the present Nitti Government. There can be no doubt but that the provocations of the past week were committed by officers more or less closely allied with this faction and with the "Arditi" white guard. At the same time there can be no doubt but that this same faction harbours designs of a nationalist revolt within the army. The Government, which is naturally timid about proceeding directly against the revolting officers, is supposed to have undertaken this indirect attack as being less dangerous, and as likely to have the support of the Socialists. How seriously the process will be pushed is another question.

Government Tries to Gain Socialist Support.

The indications are that the policy of the Government is to seek the support of the Socialists against the Nationalist faction. The words of the Government toward the Socialists are soft words. They constitute a continued invitation to join the Government, be loaded with honours, and become the support of the present régime. But the Socialists know that once the latent nationalist revolt has been suppressed, they will come next. Thus far party discipline has succeeded in preventing any deputies from accepting this alluring invitation.

"I Swear and Predict the Communist Revolution."

Francesco Misiano, when he received news of his election as deputy to the Italian Parliament from Naples (and also from Cremona), was a refugee in Austria, under sentence of death for having deserted as a soldier in the face of the enemy. His position as deputy brought him immunity, and he entered Italy, without a passport, but with a document from the Italian legation in Vienna, stating him to be the Misiano who was to be shot by the military authorities as soon as he set foot on Italian soil.

Misiano, at the outbreak of war, was an official in the railway workers' union. He was arrested and condemned for leading the anti-war demonstration of May, 1915, and was sent to the front trenches. Here, in 1916, he deserted to the Germans. In Switzerland he edited the newspaper, *The Future of the Workers*, and was arrested and condemned to prison by the Swiss authorities. He escaped to Germany, but was again arrested in the *Vorwaerts* building during Spartacus week. Here he was condemned to ten months in prison.

Misiano entered the chamber of deputies after the Royal Session, and the formal taking of the oath by the deputies. President Orlando recognised him as he entered, and called upon him to swear allegiance to the king. He arose and replied:

"I swear and predict the speedy triumph of the Communist Revolution."

A LETTER FROM LENIN.

The following letter has been received by G. M. Serrati, director of "Avanti," from Lenin.

Dear Friend,—The notices which we receive from Italy are most scarce. Only from the foreign non-communist press have we learned of your congress in Bologna and of the splendid victory of Communism. With all my heart I congratulate you and all the other Italian Communists, and predict for you the greatest and finest successes. The example of the Socialist Party of Italy will exercise an immense influence on the entire world. Above all, your decision in regard to the bourgeois parliamentary elections seems to me very sound; I hope that it will contribute towards healing the differences which have broken out among the German Communists with reference to this question.

"There is no doubt but that the open and secret opportunists—and there are plenty in the Italian Socialist parliamentary group—will endeavour to annul the decisions of Bologna. The struggle with this tendency is not yet finished, but the victory of Bologna will facilitate other victories.

"Given the international situation of Italy, many difficult tasks yet await the Italian proletariat. It may well be that England and France, aided by the Italian bourgeoisie, will attempt to provoke the Italian proletariat to a premature insurrection in order to suffocate it more easily. But they will not succeed in their design. The wonderful work of the Italian Communists serves as a guarantee that they will succeed in winning to the cause of Communism all the industrial and agricultural proletariat, including the small landholders, and then—assuming the choice of a favourable moment from the point of view of the international situation—the victory of the dictatorship of the Italian proletariat will be definitive. This is further guaranteed by the progress of the Communists in France, in England, and in the entire world.

"With Communist salutations,

"N. Lenin."

The decision of the Bologna Congress, it will be remembered, was that the party should participate in the Parliamentary elections with its full strength, but that the Parliament should be used solely as a platform to advertise the Communist Revolution. The deputies were pledged to refuse any collaboration with the bourgeois parties upon pain of immediate expulsion. The Congress clearly stated that the aim of the party was a complete Communist revolution, and that bourgeois Parliamentarism was useless as an instrument to this end.

Lenin's prediction of an attempt to provoke premature insurrections in order more easily to repress them has been strikingly confirmed in the past week. The disorders following the formal opening of the Italian Parliament were provoked by officers and organized bands of ruffians, who knew exactly what they were doing. The officers who arrested Deputy Serrati, knowing him to be a deputy, seem to have hoped for reprisals on the part of the workers. At the same time, the Government had ready many thousands of troops (always regiments recruited from localities *other* than those in which they served), together with armoured cars and machine guns in ample abundance, in all the larger cities.

It is further clear that Lenin considers the Italian situation not yet ripe for revolution. He evidently fears the peasant class, which is largely under the control of the clericals, though the Socialists are every day gaining ground in the countryside.

Finally, it is evident that Lenin regards the international situation at this moment as unfavourable to an Italian revolution—or rather, as less favourable than it will be later. At the present moment a complete blockade of Italy would mean the almost inevitable starvation of the country and of the revolution. Conditions, however, are rapidly changing. Therefore, the policy of the Italian Socialist party at this moment is to hold in check the revolutionary instinct of the masses.

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ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.

PEASANT COMMUNES.

Continued from front page.

cows—fine and healthy—are grazing and give on an average 20 to 30 pounds of milk each.

At the beginning, the villagers were somewhat hostile and derisive, saying: "You've got a fine building, plenty of land, a rich forest, orchards, cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese; how are you going to manage it all? You will eat everything up, and when spring comes you will run away from work." . . But the spring came, and the prophecy of the peasants did not come true. The Commune did not disappear; on the contrary, it became stronger. Easter came; they discussed how best to spend the holiday, and finally agreed to join forces and store wood.

I asked whether the comrades ever grumbled. Was the work not overdone? One must rest a little and have some change and amusement.

"But we do take a change when possible. No one grumbled at having to work at Easter; everyone admitted it was to be done. You see, there are 17 Communists among us; the rest are sympathisers with the party."

I remembered that comrade Mitrofanov told me of another Commune—"The Organiser," where, seeing the work made such remarkable progress, the local peasants whispered amongst each other that the Devil himself helped the Communists for having taken off their crosses.

But Devil or not, the work prospers favourably. A huge field was sown with oats, clover, beetroot, and 100 poods of buckwheat. But best of all were the potatoes. The department of agriculture promised to give the Communists seed potatoes, but did not fulfil its promise. Sowing-time was near its end, but the 400 cart-loads of seed potatoes promised by the Kalouga Government had not arrived. As if they had foreseen this, the Communists had saved their potato ration, collecting over 100 poods for sowing-time.

And here they are, returning from the field where they have been harrowing, so happy and friendly. Comrade Ratiouk introduces me. One of the members of the Communal Council sadly points to 13 dessjatines of rye, sown by the late overseer of Gelytzine's estate last autumn; "Thanks for such sowing," he said ironically; "we can do it better; our rye will not look like that!"

Of course not; I only had to look at their work and to listen to these lads and lasses singing merrily to understand that they would till and manure the land, harrow it over and over again, and willingly do all on earth to make a good harvest. In the vegetable gardens the work is in full swing. They are planting onions. There is a water pipe not quite in order; it needs repair, but there is no one to do it just now. Almost all the agricultural machines are out of order, many are broken, but they hope to be able to repair them soon. After the sowing they are going to put in order the hot-houses, where plums and peaches are now in full bloom. Nothing will be allowed to perish; everything will be put straight.

The women leave us to go and milk the cows; water is laid on in the cow sheds, which are kept very clean. The quantity of milk every cow gives is weighed and the amount recorded, in order to follow up the work of each milk-maid and follow the improvement in the supply. Young girls look with the calves, feeding them with new milk. The Commune now supplies the town with three poods of milk daily. There will also be a children's colony, which the Commune will also supply with milk.

"Time for supper," says one comrade, and we enter the common dining-room. On the way we are attracted by a tall, barefooted figure with a high forehead; this is the wood-man, formerly a man of science. Fate led him to the Commune, and he now dreams of building an apiary in the lime-thicket. The Communes have already obtained bee-hives.

The clean supper table is laid; we eat salad with radishes, and sour milk and cream with bread, the women serving and refilling our plates. The children take the meal with us. What a nice, big, friendly, new family is this Commune!

Now it is time to start for home. Comrade Ratiouk tells of the educational work of the Commune and how the peasants are completely changing their attitude towards it. He and the other Communists dream of covering expenses this year. In future they will have their own cloth from their own sheep for home weaving, and will produce everything they need by their own labour. The surplus will be given to their comrades at the loom.

Assistance must be given them, and it is not difficult to help such Communists. They live in friendship. Each one does the work appointed to him by the council of the Commune after it has been discussed and agreed to at a general meeting. When mobilisation was declared, the Commune immediately gave brave members for the east front. . .

We drive through the village in the direction of Kalouga amidst the silence of night. And from out of the stillness the deep sighs of our driver—a peasant—are borne to our ears, saying with conviction: "Yes, it is only a fool who would not go to such a Commune."

II.

A late journeyman, Oginsky by name, stands at the head of this labouring Commune called "Red Town," and executes his work efficiently. The organiser of another Commune in the Trotsky Volost, Comrade Dolgov, is not less original.

During the day Comrade Ratiouk works as a journeyman on the estate, and in the evening prepares himself for the examination for cultivators of forests.

Comrade Dolgov is a local peasant joiner, and has been a sailor on war service. Together with several other comrades, he organised the labouring Commune which was afterwards called "The Organisation." It deserves its title, for it organises into one group the villagers of the district.

In Kalouga and the county of Kalouga all the streets, squares, volosts and villages have been re-named; near Kalouga there is a village called Verlen, and there are Bebel and Rosa Luxemburg volosts. The Trotsky volost near Kalouga is considered one of the best organised.

Comrade Mitrofanov, in discussing the revenue of the Communes and Soviet Estates, was right in saying that they could not be expected to recover all the expenses incurred by them in the first year. The only thing one can demand of them is efficient organisation to ensure success in the following years, and to preserve the valuable plant of the estates.

The latter task the "Organisation" has already accomplished. Towards the end of 1917, the Janovsky estate occupied by this Commune, was of comparatively little value. During the war and the first revolution, it fell into decay. The owner, as if foreseeing the end, made no repairs. The hot-beds were destroyed, the fences rotted, the court-yard was filled with dirt.

The Communists, when they took the place over, came into possession of good land, a handsome old birch grove leading to the house, a good forest and a neglected garden. This garden has to be rooted up, as on such a low lying spot it will never be possible to make it a good garden. The buildings remain intact. There were few cattle; but enough agricultural machines. Amongst the Communists there are several families; the principles of communal life are strictly adhered to; but this does not cause any misunderstanding between the Communists with or without families. Ploughing and sowing is done in common.

When side by side with these model fields and meadows are seen the narrow, badly-laid rows of peasant sowing, it becomes clear that the "Organisation" will be victorious. One fine day, in a year or two, perhaps the peasants will gather together and organise a Commune. They will unite these strips of land into one field and till it together. The "Organisation" does everything in its power to help the villagers towards this end. Next to the ploughed land of the Commune stretches the land of the peasants and the difference is already noticeable. The "Organisation" holds meetings for the villagers and discusses the question of the new order. Already the victory is with us, although only a minority of the peasants have yet formed Communes for themselves; they have all ceased being hostile towards us. The Communes deprive them of nothing; on the contrary, they give them many things.

The peasants readily organise co-operative artels. Several of those, however, are merely fictitious, as when seeds were distributed in these artels the cunning moujiks thought to themselves: "Why should we not get seeds first?" Everything was in order for the formation of the artel, and after having received the seeds, they divided them, each peasant sowing his own strip of land. But this was not the case everywhere. There are many firmly established labouring artels. We are only at the beginning of the immense process of construction. We must be more thoughtful, more observant, pay more attention to the smaller needs of unity, and we shall master the instinct of ownership and build up a life on a Communal basis.

E. YAROSLAVSKY.

(People's Russian Information Bureau.)

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.

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LONDON MEETINGS—OUTDOOR.

Sunday, Dec. 28th. Osborn Street, Whitechapel, 11.45 a.m. Minnie Birch, Melvina Walker.
Friday, Jan. 2nd, 1920. The Square, Woolwich. 7.30 p.m. Melvina Walker.
Saturday, Jan. 3rd. Great Push in Greenwich.

INDOOR.

Monday, Dec. 29th 20, Railway Street, Poplar, 7.30 p.m. W.S.F. Business Meeting. 8.30 p.m. Reading Circle.
Friday, Jan. 2nd, 1920. 400, Old Ford Road, Bow 7—10 p.m. Dancing.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

East London Workers' Committee.
Sunday, Dec. 28th. Victoria Park, 12 noon, Walter Ponder and others.
Tuesday, Dec. 30th. Queen's Road, Dalston Lane. 7.30 p.m. Walter Ponder and others.
Thursday, Jan. 1st, 1920. 400, Old Ford Road, Bow. 7.30 p.m. Business Meeting.

East Ham League of Rights.
Tuesday, Dec. 30th. Old Public Offices, Wakefield Rd. 8 p.m. Melvina Walker—*Soviets or Parliament.*

IMPORTANT.

Owing to printing difficulties, due to the Christmas Holidays, we must apologise for this small paper. Our readers will however have the pleasure of receiving a DOUBLE NUMBER about the middle of January. It will contain very special and exclusive information.

Further particulars later.

MORE MONEY FOR DENIKIN.

Mr. Churchill acknowledged in the House of Commons that £500,000 worth of technical railway materials have been sent to Denikin to help him reorganise internal communications. For the same amount clothing and other commodities are being sent by the War Office. So the £15,000,000 was not the last!

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